



## ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC DEANS

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## 1. Rationale

The Academic Dean is responsible for ensuring that program review is a serious process for academic improvement and strategic decision-making. While faculty contribute disciplinary expertise and institutional offices provide data and structure, it is the Dean who must set the tone, establish expectations, and ensure that results inform budgeting, hiring, and program planning. Without consistent engagement from the Dean, program review risks becoming disconnected from the actual decisions that shape academic quality and sustainability. This document outlines the scope and responsibilities of the Dean in overseeing, guiding, and acting on program review within their college/school. It should be read in conjunction with the "Academic Program Review

Guidelines", which guides chairs and faculty in preparing a self-study, and the 'Academic Program Review Calendar', which provides the timelines by which various action must be completed.

## 2. General Responsibilities

Deans are responsible for ensuring that every phase of the program review process, up to and including the submission of materials to the Office of the Provost, is completed thoroughly and on schedule. While academic departments, institutional offices, and external reviewers each have defined roles, Deans must provide active oversight throughout. Deans must monitor progress, verify that each step is being completed, and intervene when timelines or standards are at risk. Once materials are submitted to the Provost, responsibility for the process shifts—but until that point, Deans are accountable for ensuring that reviews are not only completed but completed well.

## 3. The Review Process

### 3.1 Initiating the Process

- Coordinate with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) to facilitate an initial meeting with the department chair and, where applicable, the departmental curriculum and instructional committee or other appropriate departmental body;
- Provide a brief overview of the goals, procedures, timelines, and expectations for the program review process;
- Share information about allowable expenses, including potential honoraria (up to \$1,500) and reimbursement protocols;
- Launch the process by introducing the NJCU Dashboard as a key resource and ensure the department receives appropriate training on how to use it.

### 3.2 Reviewer Selection

- Confirm that the Department follows the necessary protocols and procedures in selecting the external reviewer(s);
- Offer the Department assistance in finding an external reviewer(s) if necessary;
- Ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between the proposed reviewer(s) and departmental faculty;
- Approve the Department's recommended reviewer and submit the name to the Office of the Provost for final approval.

### 3.3 Self-Study Oversight

Ensure that the department begins the self-study in a timely manner and understands the required components.

- Confirm that the department has access to all relevant data and support resources (e.g., Institutional Effectiveness, Academic Affairs, Finance, etc.).
- Review drafts of the self-study to assess completeness and clarity.
- Provide feedback to the department and request revisions if the self-study is incomplete, unclear, or lacking in analysis.
- Monitor progress to ensure that the self-study is submitted on schedule.
- Verify that the final self-study meets expectations before it is shared with the external reviewer and the Office of the Provost.

### 3.4 Reviewer Visit

- Actively collaborate with the Department to schedule the external reviewer's visit to campus as part of the review process;
- Review and approve the agenda to confirm that the reviewer's schedule is appropriate and aligned with the goals of the site visit;
- Meet with the external reviewer during the campus visit. Provide the reviewer a sense of how the program fits into broader college goals and solicit preliminary feedback.

### 3.5 Reviewer's Report

- Following the site visit, the reviewer must submit his or her report to the Dean and the relevant Department according to the timeline published in Academic Program Review calendar.
- If necessary (optional), Deans may request a separate, confidential reviewer report.
- Ensure that the reviewer's report addresses the following sections of the self-study:
  - Executive Summary;
  - Mission and Goals;
  - Academic Programs;
  - Student Success-Retention and Graduation;
  - Enrollment-Recruitment;

- Faculty-Teaching;
- Faculty-Research;
- Resources and Infrastructure

### 3.6 Dean's Feedback

- Ensure that the department's written response to the external reviewer's report is complete, clear, and appropriately addresses the reviewer's observations and recommendations.
- Prepare written feedback to the department after the self-study, external reviewer's report, and departmental response have been submitted.
- This feedback should guide the department in developing its action plan. It should highlight key findings, identify priorities for improvement, and note any areas where further clarification or analysis is needed.
- As appropriate, the Dean may meet with department faculty prior to finalizing this feedback.

### 3.7 Action Plan Oversight

Once the department has received the Dean's feedback, the Dean is responsible for ensuring the timely development and quality of the program's action plan.

- Confirm that the department submits an action plan in response to the self-study and external reviewer's report.
- Review the action plan to ensure it includes specific, measurable action items and realistic timelines for implementation.
- Evaluate whether the proposed actions are feasible, aligned with institutional priorities, and likely to produce meaningful improvement.
- Engage in discussion with the department as needed to revise or clarify elements of the plan.
- Approve the final version of the action plan and forward it to the Office of the Provost for review and approval.